

Spanning the Gap

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Loch Lomond Accessible Fishing Pier

By Architectue Intern Polly Ryan

For the past thirty years, much has been done to promote accessibility in building design. The passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 was a major advancement in accessible design. However, it has only been in the past three to four years that accessibility has been promoted for outdoor recreation sites. A recommended approach to planning such sites is to create facilities for a variety of activities at several levels of difficulty. This encourages people who may not ordinarily participate in the activities of mainstream society to do so. Ultimately, accessible recreation facilities will help to break down barriers for the aged and persons with disabilities.

At Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, a fishing pier project at Loch Lomond Recreation Site has been designed to be easily accessible to people with a variety of ability levels. It will be built by a group of boy scouts, led by Jason Cichy of Dingmans Ferry, PA, as an eagle scout project. Consideration for accessibility began with choosing the site. It will be close as possible to the parking area, while allowing sufficient distance for the path to gently slope down to the water's edge. Using level and firm material, the trail surface and width will allow for easy travel in wheelchairs. The surface of the pier is wood, with the boards oriented perpendicular to the direction of travel, making it easy for wheelchairs and strollers to pass over it. Usability rather than building codes determined the



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View of the lake from the completed pier in 1997, showing railing with armrest. (NPS photo)



The pier in 2001. (NPS photo by Ken Sandri)

design of the guardrail on the pier. Standard 42-inch guard rails would be prohibitive to fishing; therefore, a 36-inch railing with an armrest and bait shelf integrated into the design is being used.

When completed, this fully accessible new pier, together with less developed sites along the lake's edge, will provide a variety of accessibility levels for anglers.

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Editor's Note: The pier and an accessible path to it have been completed.